

## RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

Interior in the Provisional Government at Petrograd. On the other hand, the leader of the Social Democratic Party (Mensheviks) in the Duma, Nicolai Semenovitch Chkheidze, also a Georgian, was elected President of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. This situation lasted till November, 1917, when the Bolsheviks forcibly overthrew the Provisional Government and assumed power in Russia. Complete chaos followed in Transcaucasia: the remnants of the Russian administration of the region fled and joined the counterrevolutionary forces led by tsarist generals in southern Russia. The responsibility for the preservation of law and order fell to the local politically conscious elements. The Georgian Menshevik leaders Chkheidze and Tseretelli, eliminated from power in Petrograd, arrived in Transcaucasia. They and other native Social Democrats, opposed to Bolshevism, immediately set to work to separate Georgia and other Caucasian areas from Russia. On November 15, Georgians, Armenians, and Tatars of Azerbaijan formed the Transcaucasian Committee.

From now on the organization of independent Transcaucasia proceeded at a quick pace. First the Transcaucasian regions formed a common Assembly (*Seim*) in February, 1918. Then after a formal declaration of independence on April 22, 1918, they created the Transcaucasian Federation. It was not destined, however, to last long. The impact of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, concluded in March, 1918, between the Central Powers and Soviet Russia, caused the division of the Federation into three separate states. On May 26, Georgia declared her independence. This act was followed by similar

declarations, on May 28, by Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Another result of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty was the gradual penetration of Turkish and German forces into the newly established Transcaucasian republics. According to the treaty Turkey was authorized to occupy three formerly Russian districts, Kars, Ardahan, and Batum. These districts constituted, however, part of the newly proclaimed Republic of Georgia. Despite Georgia's protests the Turks promptly moved into Kars and Ardahan and were about to enter Batum when they were suddenly preceded by their own ally, Germany. Under the guise of military co-operation a German division was landed in Batum, thus depriving the Turks of an important